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MELANESIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH LANGUAGE GUIDE

FIRST LEVEL

NAVPERS-15,037



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PIDGIN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE GUIDE

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MELANESIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH

HINTS ON PRONOUNCING MELANESIAN PIDGIN ENGLISH

These are a few hints to help you in listening to the Melanesian Pidgin English records which have been supplied to your troop unit. At first Pidgin English may strike you as just plain funny and nothing to take seriously. You must remember that it is a true *language* with its own grammar, vocabulary and special way of saying things. You cannot just mix up English or talk the way you think a Chinese laundryman talks. And remember, learning a few simple phrases of Pidgin and seeing how it works might mean the difference between life and death to you.

Pidgin is spoken in much the same way in New Guinea and through the islands south and east of New Guinea, all the way to New Caledonia. The dialect you are going to hear on the records is the one

used in the eastern part of New Guinea, in New Britain, and through the islands of Bougainville and Buka. The differences that are important in the usage of the Solomons are noted at the end of the "List of Most Useful Words and Phrases."

In general, your pronunciation of words that are the same in English and Pidgin will be understood by the natives. However, you will notice that their pronunciation might sound very strange to you. In general, you will notice the following things:

1. *t, d, l, and r* are often confused, and your ear must be sharp enough to catch the individual native's tricks.
2. *k and g* are often interchanged to our ears. Actually, the native is using one sound for both, sometimes sounding to us more like a *k*, sometimes more like a *g*. (Example: *kiss-im* or *giss-im* . . . *ee come* meaning "bring." This is probably from English "git" for "get.")
3. *f and p* are often confused to ours ears. Again the native is often giving a sound half-way between *p* and *f* which might sound sometimes more like *g* and sometimes more like *f*. Actually, the sound is like the one you make when you blow out a match. Example: *pella* or *fella*,

		from English "fellow," or <i>pinis</i> or <i>finis</i> , from English "finish."
4. <i>ck</i> and <i>sh</i>		are often changed to "s." Example: <i>too mas</i> from English "too much" and <i>pinis</i> from English "finish."
5. <i>th</i>		often is changed to <i>d</i> or <i>t</i> . Example: <i>someting</i> for English "something."
6. Vowels, generally:	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i> as in <i>sofa</i> is often put before English words beginning with a consonant. Example: <i>a-road</i> for English "road." A vowel sounding like the <i>y</i> in <i>city</i> is often put between sounds that are pronounced together in English. Example: <i>si-moke</i> for English "smoke."
7. In words which have changed greatly from their English equivalents or in writing words taken directly from the native languages, the following system is used:		
	<i>ah</i> and <i>a</i> equal	the <i>a</i> in <i>father</i>
	<i>a</i> equals	the <i>a</i> in <i>sofa</i> (in unaccented syllables).
	<i>ai</i> equals	the <i>ai</i> in <i>aisle</i> .
	<i>au</i> equals	the <i>ow</i> in <i>cow</i> .
	<i>aw</i> equals	the <i>aw</i> in <i>law</i> .
	<i>ee</i> equals	the <i>ee</i> in <i>feet</i> .
	<i>eh</i> equals	the <i>e</i> in <i>let</i> .
	<i>oh</i> equals	the <i>o</i> in <i>go</i> .
	<i>u</i> equals	the <i>u</i> in <i>put</i> , except when another pronunciation is noted for it.
	<i>uh</i> equals	the <i>u</i> in <i>but</i> .

8. You will notice Pidgin has a peculiar whining sort of intonation. This is quite easy to imitate and very important. Try to memorize the phrases on the records exactly as you hear them, and give this intonation whenever you try to speak Pidgin.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Here is a list of the most useful words and phrases you will need in Melanesian Pidgin English. *You should learn them by heart.* They are the words and phrases included on the Melanesian Pidgin English language records, and appear here in the order they occur on the records.

Greetings and General Phrases

<i>English</i>	<i>Simplified Melanesian Pidgin English spelling</i>
master	master (pronounced MAHS-tuh)
Yes	<i>ee-got</i> (from English "he got") or <i>na-wuh-name</i> (English "what name") or <i>yes</i>
No	<i>no-got</i> or <i>no</i>

Understand?	<i>you savvy</i>
I don't understand	<i>uh, me long-long</i>
Speak slowly	<i>you no can talk hurry-up; talk easy (pronounced EE-see)</i>
Where is	<i>where stop</i>
	<i>ee stop where</i>
The government rest house in the village	<i>house kiap (KEE-ahp)</i>
Where is the Government rest house?	<i>where stop house kiap</i>
hotel	<i>house drink</i>
Where is the hotel?	<i>house drink, ee stop where</i>
a toilet	<i>house peck-peck</i>
Where is a toilet?	<i>house peck-peck, ee stop where</i>

The answer to your question "where is such and such" will often be the phrase below accompanied by a gesture.

It's this way or that way *em, ee stop along hap* (from English "half")

If you want directions to a place farther than a short walking distance ask a native to accompany you. For this you use the phrase equal to, "you come and show me the road."

You come and show me *You come line-im me along road the road*

Time

Time is given in terms of the sun's position in the sky, and, as you will see later, distances are given in terms of time.

When did he come?	<i>by'n'by sun, ee stop where; now man, ee come up</i>
When will I get there	<i>by'n'by sun, ee stop where; now, me come up</i>

The native will point to the path of the sun (directly over head for noon, half way between the horizon and the zenith for three o'clock, and so forth) and say:

sun, ee stop allasame

Phrases for Time of Day

An hour before dawn	<i>number one pigeon, ee cry</i>
Dawn	<i>too-light</i>
Noon	<i>bell-o kai-kai</i>
About six o'clock	<i>avvy-noon</i>
Just after sunset	<i>too-dark pinis (English "finish")</i>
Night	<i>big night</i>

You should ask distances in such a way that the answer will be a time of day. For example, if you want to say, "How far is it to Rabaul," you should use the Pidgin for "If I leave here at dawn (noon, six o'clock) when do I get to Rabaul?", you say:

*Suppose me loose-im place 'ere along too-light, by'n'by sun,
ee stop where now me come up along Rabaul?*

Distances can also be guessed from the number of times the verb, (generally "go") is repeated or drawled out.

It's pretty far	<i>man, ee go-go-go-go-go</i>
	<i>or man, ee go-o-o-o-o</i>
It's very far	<i>man, ee go lo-o-o-ng way</i> <i>too mas (English "too much")</i>

You need to know the numbers. One to ten are the same as the English, but always add "pella" (English "fellow"). For instance:

One man has two wives	<i>one pella man, ee got two pella mary</i>
------------------------------	---

Numbers

eleven	<i>one pella ten one</i>
twelve	<i>one pella ten two</i>
twenty	<i>two pella ten</i>
one hundred	<i>ten pella ten</i>
one thousand	<i>plenty too mas</i>

When you want to know what something is or what it's for, you say:

wuh-name (English "what name") *someting 'ere*
or *dis pella someting belong wuh-name*

Designation

I want	<i>me like</i>
I want to eat	<i>me like kai-kai</i>
I want to drink	<i>me like drink</i>
Bring it	<i>kiss-im, ee come</i>
I want some firewood	<i>kiss-im some pella pire-wood, ee come</i>

Foods

milk	<i>soo-soo</i>
a young cocoanut to drink	<i>koo-lau</i>
a ripe banana	<i>mau (also means "ripe")</i>
a ripe papaya	<i>paw-paw, ee mau</i>
pineapple	<i>na-nas</i>
limes, lemons, etc.	<i>moo-lee</i>

eggs	<i>kee-au</i>
chicken	<i>kahk-a-rook</i>
beef	<i>bull-a-ma-cow</i> (<i>put the accent on "cow"</i>)
vegetables	<i>sah-yoo</i>
foods like potatoes	<i>tah-roh</i>
	<i>mammy</i>
	<i>yams</i>
	<i>kau-kau</i>
native tobacco	<i>brus</i> ("u" as in "put")
drinking water	<i>water belong drink</i>
water for washing	<i>water belong wash-wash</i>

When you want to buy something in a shop or store you say:
me like buy-im some pella

Then add the name of the thing wanted

To find out how much things cost, you say:

*By'n'by me buy-im long
 how mas mark*

The answer will be given you in "marks," an Australian shilling, worth about 25 cents.

If you think the price is too high, you can say:

*Dis pella someting, ee no eenup
 (English "enough") along two
 pella (three pella, ten pella,
 etc.) mark*

Time

yesterday	<i>assady</i>
today	<i>now</i>

something that will happen today	<i>by'n'by now</i>
something that has happened today	<i>now tas all (English, "that's all")</i>
tomorrow	<i>tomorrow</i>
day after tomorrow	<i>hap tomorrow</i>
day before yesterday	<i>assaday befor</i>

The days of the week are: Sunday, one-day, two-day, three-day, etc.

The word for week is Sunday.

Useful Phrases

What is your name?	<i>call-im name belong you</i>
What is the Pidgin for this —	<i>Dis pella someting, white-man ee call-im wuh-name</i>
That's all right, or Never mind	<i>mahs-kee</i>

In order to get an idea of how Pidgin sounds, listen to the following passage. A white man is asking a native boy what happened to a native whom he and his friend saw fighting the day before.

"Assaday" me go along place, one time along ('with') pe-rehn (English 'friend') belong me. Allright, me two pella look-im two pella kanaka ('natives') ee pight. Allright now one pella, ee kiss-im hap dee-wigh (English 'half-tree', hence 'club' or 'stick') pight him dis nudder pella man, ee die; tas all ee no ee die pinis. Allright, all-ee carry man, ee go. All-ee pass-im

(“bandaged”) head belong-im along dis pella house. Now, allasame wuh-name? Dis pella man ee pight-im em, ee no ee stop?”

“Yes, master ee no ee stop, ee run away pinis.”

We will now take the passage sentence by sentence. Repeat in Pidgin English each time.

1. Yesterday I went to the village	“Assaday me go along place one time along (“with”) pe-rehn (English ‘friend’) belong me.
2. With my friend.	<i>Allright, me two pella (we) look-im two pella kanaka (“natives”) ee pight</i>
3. We saw two natives fighting	<i>Allright now one pella, ee kiss-im hap dee-wigh, (English ‘half-tree’)</i>
4. One of them took a piece of wood	<i>pight him dis nudder pella man, ee die; tas all ee no ee die pinis.</i>
5. And knocked the other one out, but didn't kill him.	<i>Allright all-ee carry man, ee go.</i>
6. They picked the man up	<i>All-ee pass-im (“bandaged”) head belong-im along dis pella house.</i>
7. They bandaged his head in this house.	<i>Now, allasame wuh-name</i>
8. What I want to know is:	<i>Dis pella man ee pight-im em, ee no ee stop?</i>
9. Isn't the man who hit the other fellow here?	

10. No, master, he's not here. Yes, master, ee no ee stop here.

11. He has run away. ee run away pinis."

For most of the Solomon Islands, note the following variations:

1. "I don't understand"—you will hear instead of "me long-long," "me no harim (English hear) good," or "me no harim savvy."
2. When did he come?—"em ee can come up long wuh-name time?
3. When will I get there?—"me can come up long wuh-name time?"
4. In addition to "brus," the word "tambak" for native tobacco is frequently heard.
5. In most of the Solomons, instead of *dee-wigh* for "tree," the straight English "tree" or "te-ree" is most commonly used.

ADDITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES

Natural Objects

bank	<i>ah-ra-reh</i>
darkness	<i>too-dark</i>
daytime	<i>long-sun</i>
garden	<i>wuhk</i> (<i>English “work”</i>)
fire	<i>pire</i> (<i>English “fire”</i>)
forest or jungle	<i>bush</i>
grass	<i>grass</i>
ground	<i>gi-roun</i> (<i>English “ground”</i>)

hill	liklik mountain
lake	roun water (English "round water")
swamp	gi-roun ee no strong
moon	moon
mountain	smountain
sea	wawl water (English "salt water") or soda water
rain	rain or a rain
river	water
star	si-tar (English "star")
stream	barik or barat or barad
sun	sun
wind	win (English "wind")

Time

day	day
month	moon
morning	morning time
night	big night
year	Christmas

Relationships

boy	monkey
brother	brudder or ba-rudder
child	pickaninny
daughter	pickaninny mary

father	<i>papa</i>
girl	<i>monkey mary or liklik mary</i>
man	<i>man</i>
mother	<i>mama</i>
sister	<i>sisser</i>
son	<i>pickaninny man</i>
woman or wife	<i>mary</i>
grandparent	<i>tumboona</i>
relations-in-law	<i>tahmboo</i>

Human Body

arms	<i>ahn</i>
back	<i>back side</i>
body	<i>si-kin (English, "skin")</i>
eye	<i>eye</i>
ear	<i>ear</i>
finger	<i>pinger</i>
foot	<i>leg</i>
hair	<i>grass belong head</i>
hand	<i>ahn (English "arm")</i> <i>or han (English "hand")</i>
head	<i>head</i>
leg	<i>leg</i>
mouth	<i>mout</i>
nose	<i>nose (pronounced nohs)</i>
teeth	<i>teet</i>
toe	<i>finger belong leg</i>
joint	<i>si-crew (English "screw")</i>

House and Furniture

bed	<i>bed</i>
blanket	<i>ba-lanket</i>
chair	<i>chair</i>
cup	<i>cup</i>
door	<i>door</i>
house	<i>house</i>
kitchen	<i>house cook</i>
stairs	<i>ladder</i>
table	<i>table</i>
wall	<i>banis</i>
window	<i>window</i>
mosquito net	<i>taw-nam (particularly in Rabaul area)</i>

Food and Drink—Tobacco

cocoanut	<i>coconuhs</i>
ripe cocoanuts	<i>dry coconuhs</i>
food	<i>kai-kai</i>
cigarette	<i>cigar or smoke</i>
bananas	<i>banana</i>
fruit	<i>pickaninny belong dee-wigh (English "tree")</i>
cucumbers	<i>kam-bang</i>
salt	<i>swawl (English "salt")</i>
fish	<i>piss</i>
sugar or sugar cane	<i>sukar</i>
coffee	<i>kawpee</i>

meat	<i>meat</i>
jam	<i>jam</i>
ice	<i>ice</i>
mango	<i>mahngo</i>
shrimp	<i>kindam</i>
crab	<i>koo-pa</i>
rice	<i>rice</i>
pipe	<i>pipe</i>
pepper	<i>kee-na</i>
clams, mussels, oysters	<i>kee-na</i>
tea	<i>tea</i>
steak	<i>meat</i>
tomatoes	<i>tomabtoes (rare)</i>
whiskey	<i>whiskey</i>
beer	<i>beer</i>
betel nut	<i>pilly nuhs</i>

Surroundings

bridge, jetty or wharf	<i>bridge</i>
church	<i>house loh-too</i>
city	<i>town</i>
market	<i>boom or boong</i>
native men's house	<i>house tamberan</i>
dwelling house	<i>house married</i>
path	<i>road or a-road</i>
post office	<i>house post</i>
police station	<i>house police</i>
store	<i>si-tore (English "store")</i>
street	<i>road</i>

cinema	<i>picture</i>
town	<i>town</i>
village	<i>place belong ka-na-ka</i>

Animals

bird	<i>pigeon</i>
pigeon	<i>ba-lus</i>
chicken	<i>poul (English "fowl")</i>
cassowary	<i>maw-rook</i>
crocodile	<i>puk-puk ("u" as in "put")</i>
dog	<i>dog</i>
goat	<i>may</i>
horse	<i>waws or hors-ee</i>
flies	<i>lahng or gnat-gnat</i>
mouse or rat	<i>rat</i>
ants	<i>anis</i>
pig	<i>pig</i>
shark	<i>shark</i>
sheep	<i>sheep-sheep</i>
snake	<i>si-nake</i>
insect	<i>bin-a-tan</i>
small kangaroo	<i>see-kou</i>
leech	<i>liklik si-nake</i>
lice	<i>niu-nit</i>
duck	<i>pa-to</i>
bedbugs	<i>nus-nus</i>
cat	<i>pussy</i>
spider	<i>dum-dum ("u" as in "but")</i>
cow	<i>bull-a-ma-cow (put the accent on "cow")</i>

Trades and Occupations

cook	<i>cook</i>
government representative	<i>lu-lu-igh</i> or <i>number one</i> (for the whole area) or <i>ku-ku-righ</i> (for a village)

Numbers

first	<i>number one and so on</i>
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Clothing

belt	<i>led</i>
boots	<i>soo</i> (<i>English "shoe"</i>)
coat	<i>coat</i>
hat	<i>hat</i>
necktie	<i>tie</i>
cloth	<i>lap-lap</i>
(outer) shorts	<i>short fella trousers</i>
shirt	<i>shirt</i>
socks	<i>sock</i> or <i>leg</i>
sweater	<i>sweater</i>
trousers	<i>trousers</i>
undershirt	<i>singlis</i>

Adjectives

good	<i>good-fella</i>
bad	<i>no good</i>
big	<i>big-fella</i>

small	<i>lik-lik or lik-a-lik (lik-i-lik in area around Rabaul)</i>
right	<i>shoot</i>
left	<i>links</i>
	<i>or kas</i>
	<i>or arm no good</i>
sick	<i>sick</i>
well	<i>all right or stop nothing</i>
hungry	<i>hungry</i>
thirsty	<i>hungry long water</i>
black	<i>black-fella</i>
white	<i>white-fella</i>
red	<i>red-fella</i>
blue	<i>black-fella</i>
green	<i>black-fella or allasame leaf</i>
yellow	<i>yellow or white-fellow-liklik</i>
high	<i>too-mas (English "too much")</i>
low	<i>ee down</i>
long	<i>long fella</i>
short	<i>short fella</i>
deep	<i>ee down too mas</i>
shallow	<i>ee no go down</i>
cold	<i>col</i>
hot	<i>hot-fella</i>
wet	<i>ee got water</i>
dry	<i>dry-fella</i>
dirty	<i>ee got dirty</i>
clean	<i>clean-fella</i>
expensive	<i>dear too mas</i>
cheap	<i>ee no dear</i>

empty	<i>noting (English "nothing" This follows noun)</i>
old	<i>old-fella (things)</i>
new	<i>la-poon (people)</i>
young	<i>new-fella</i>
full	<i>young-fella</i>
ready	<i>full-up</i> <i>ready finis or a-ready finis</i>

Pronouns

I	<i>me</i>
we	<i>me-fella (often does not include the person you are talking to)</i>
we	<i>you-me (includes person you are talking to) me-two-fellow (when only two people are speaking)</i>
you (singular)	<i>you</i>
you	<i>you-two-fella (talking to two people)</i>
you (plural)	<i>you-fellow</i>
he	<i>em</i>
she	<i>em</i>
my, mine	<i>belong me</i>
yours	<i>belong you</i> <i>or belong you-all</i>
theirs	<i>belongs all</i>
his	<i>belong em</i>
our	<i>belong me-fella</i>

they	<i>all</i>
this or that	<i>this-fella</i>
these or those	<i>this-fella all-a man</i>
which?	<i>wuh-name?</i>
who?	<i>hoosat? ("who's that")</i>
how?	<i>all-a-same wuh-name?</i>
how many?	<i>how mas? (English "much")</i>
who, which or that (relative pronouns)	<i>"</i>
anyone	<i>one-fellow</i>
everybody	<i>altogether man</i>
all	<i>altogether</i>

Prepositions

of, from	<i>belong</i>
to, in	<i>long or along</i>
with	<i>one time along</i>
near	<i>close to</i>
in front	<i>along eye belong</i>

Adverbs

about	<i>on top</i>
again	<i>'gain</i>
behind or after	<i>behind</i>
below	<i>underna</i>
far	<i>long way</i>
here	<i>'ere</i>

as much as	<i>ee-nup along</i>
less than	<i>en no ee-nup along</i>
more	<i>more</i>
enough	<i>enup</i>
already	<i>finis (English "finish", pronounced "pinis" in Rabaul Area)</i>
a little	<i>liklik</i>
bigger, etc.	<i>bit-fella more</i>
near	<i>close to</i>
on that side	<i>along hap ee go</i>
on this side	<i>along hap ee come</i>
there (pointing)	<i>along this-fella hap</i>
very	<i>more or too mas (follows the adjective)</i>
where	<i>where stop</i>

Conjunctions

and	<i>now (often pronounced "nuh")</i>
for	<i>belong</i>
but	<i>tas all ("that's all")</i>
if	<i>suppose</i>
yet	<i>yet</i>
still not	<i>enoh yet</i>

Phrases for Every Day

Come here	<i>you come</i>
Come quickly	<i>you come hurry-up</i>

Go quickly	<i>Run you go</i>
What do you want?	<i>You look-out-im wuh-name something?</i>
Bring some drinking water	<i>Kiss-im water belong drink ee come</i>
Bring some food	<i>Bring-im kai-kai ee come</i>
Where is the village?	<i>Where stop place belong ka-na-ka?</i>
I am hungry	<i>Me hungry</i>
I am thirsty	<i>Me hungry along water</i>
Where are you going?	<i>You go where?</i>
I'm going for a walk	<i>Me lim-lim-boor</i>
Be careful! or Look out!	<i>Look out</i>
Wait a minute	<i>Wait past time</i>
	<i>or Sun up past time</i>
Where can I sleep	<i>Me can sleep long wuh-name place?</i>
I haven't any money, I have only cigarettes	<i>Me no got money, si-moke tasall</i>
I am sick	<i>Me got sick (point to the part of the body affected).</i>
I am an American soldier,	<i>Me man belong 'Merica, me</i>
I am your friend	<i>pe-rehn belong you</i>



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